

**Testimony Prepared for the July 27, 2018, Field Briefing in Eddyville, Kentucky
for the
Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment
of the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
by
Bobby Wilson
Deputy Executive Director
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency**

Information about the four species of Asian Carp in our country was provided by Ron Brooks, the Fisheries Division Director with the Kentucky Department of Wildlife Resources. In an effort to simplify this Testimony, I reference the Testimony provided by Ron Brooks about the species, the history of their presence in our country, and the issues that they have and are causing to our waters.

I concur with Mr. Brooks' testimony concerning the great cooperation between our state agencies and other federal agencies in working together to fight the invasive carp as well as the need for more funding to be effective in our efforts to reduce their numbers and stop their advancement up the Cumberland and Tennessee River systems. Tennessee and Kentucky have been working together since at least 2010 in trying to find solutions to this relatively new problem in our country and in our states. I can remember the first time our Agency collected an Asian carp. We were sampling the Mississippi River in 2001 and netted a bighead carp. In 2003 we collected a silver carp in the Mississippi River and didn't know what it was because it was so new. A short time later both the bighead and silver carp began to show up in Kentucky and Barkley lakes.

We have documented strong year classes of silver carp in Kentucky and Barkley lakes in 2011 and 2015. Whether these year classes were the result of a huge spawn within the waters of Kentucky and/or Barkley lakes or whether they were spawned in the Ohio River and migrated through the locks of Kentucky and Barkley dams is unknown but their presence is well known. What is also known is that there is a plan to fight these foreign invaders and funding is necessary to make this plan successful. The basic plan is to: Implement a deterrent system at Barkley and Kentucky locks to stop the endless migration of Asian carp from the Ohio river; implement a deterrent system at Gunter's Lock on the Tennessee River system and the Cordell Hull Lock on the Cumberland River system to prevent the upstream migration of Asian carp into areas above these locks that have not yet been contaminated by them; and implement a commercial harvest plan to reduce their abundance by providing incentives such as increases in the price per pound of Asian carp and other amenities such as ice machines and durable nets to commercial fishermen and processors. There is also a need to fund and conduct more research on Asian carp to better understand their life history as well as determine their abundance.

So repeating what Ron Brooks said in his testimony, on behalf of the people of Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama and Mississippi, we are reaching out to Congress for \$5 million annually for 5 years. The funding would be used to implement the plan and the research that I just mentioned. A lack of sufficient funding is the only obstruction to conducting the effort necessary to eventually control and reduce Asian carp numbers in Kentucky and Barkley lakes, and to thwart the upriver movement of established Asian carp populations. The people of these four states depend upon us to reduce the number of Asian carp in our waters and to stop their spread. We need your help to obtain the funding and support necessary for us to be successful.